

REMARKS

The Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1, 2, 4, 6-11, 14, and 16-23 are pending. Claims 5 and 15 are cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Claims 3, 12, and 13 were previously cancelled. Claims 1, 2, 6-8, 11, and 16-18 are amended, and claims 21-23 are added. Claims 1, 11, and 22 are independent. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein.

Information Disclosure Citation

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the reference supplied with the Information Disclosure Statement filed August 24, 2005, and for providing Applicants with an initialed copy of the PTO-1449 form filed therewith.

Request for Withdrawal of Finality of Office Action / Reasons for Entry of Amendments

The Examiner previously rejected claims 5-10 and 15-20 in the Office Action dated June 24, 2005. However, after reconsideration, the Examiner now states that claims 5-15 and 15-20 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. The Applicants had no way of knowing that the Examiner's previous rejection included errors. Not until the final rejection was issued did the Applicants learn that the previous rejection of claims 5-10 and 15-20 included errors.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the finality of the previous Office Action is respectfully requested.

Further, it is respectfully requested that this Amendment be entered into the Official File in view of the fact that the amendments to the claims automatically place the application in condition for allowance.

In the alternative, if the Examiner does not agree that this application is in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that this Amendment be entered for the purpose of appeal. This Amendment reduces the issues on appeal by cancelling allowable claims 5 and 15 and incorporating the limitations thereof into independent claims 1 and 11, respectively. This Amendment was not presented at an earlier date in view of the fact that the Examiner has just now reversed his previous rejection in this Final Office Action.

Allowable Subject Matter

After reconsideration, the Examiner now states that claims 5-10 and 15-20 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

The Applicants thank the Examiner for the early indication of allowable subject matter in this application. As set forth above, the limitations of objected-to claim 5 and 15 have been incorporated into independent claims 1 and 11, and therefore independent claims 1 and 11 should be in condition for allowance.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over St. John (U.S. 4,226,320).

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Amendments to Independent Claims 1 and 11

As mentioned above, but while not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, independent claims 1 and 11 are amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected-to claims 5 and 15, respectively.

Accordingly, independent claims 1 and 11 are in condition for allowance.

Added Independent Claim 22

In addition, independent claim 22 is amended herein to recite a combination of elements directed to a centrifugal clutch, including *inter alia*

wherein each of said weight component members has a first part and a second part each being formed of a sintered metallic powder, the first parts having smaller specific gravities than the second parts, whereby a center of gravity of said clutch weight is set to a predetermined position.

Support for the novel combination of elements set forth in independent claim 22 can be seen, for example, in FIGS. 4 and 5.

By contrast, as can be seen in St. John (and previously cited references Takefuta et al., JP 63-23034, and Peterson) this document fails to suggest each of said weight component members has a first part and a second part each being formed of a sintered metallic powder, the first parts having smaller specific gravities than the second parts, whereby a center of gravity of said clutch weight is set to a predetermined position.

While forming a single material by baking a certain sintered metallic powder may be commonly known, nowhere in the prior art is there any suggestion of each of said weight component members has a first part and a second part each being formed of a sintered metallic powder, the first parts having smaller specific gravities than the second parts, whereby a center of gravity of said clutch weight is set to a predetermined position.

On page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that “the method of making the weight component members would not carry patentable weight...”. The Examiner is advised that added independent claim 22 is now properly presented as an apparatus claim.

At least for the reasons explained above, the Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of elements as set forth in independent claim 22 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including St. John, whether taken alone, or combined with previously cited references Takefuta et al., JP 63-23034, and Peterson.

Therefore, independent claim 22 is in condition for allowance.

The Examiner will note that dependent claims 6-8 and 16-18 are amended, and dependent claims 21 and 23 are added.

All dependent claims are in condition for allowance due to their dependency from allowable independent claims, or due to the additional novel features set forth therein.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject claims, but merely to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 205-8000.

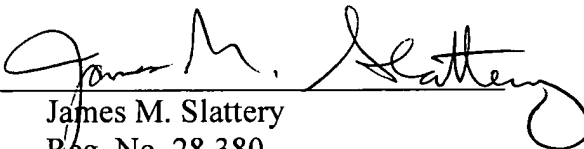
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If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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